

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated January 13, 2005. Claims 7, 13, 15 and 16 have been amended. Claims 1, 4-13 and 16 are now pending in this case.

Claims 1, 4-7 and 10-13 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Cheng (U.S. Patent No. 6,329,986). The rejection is respectfully traversed and Applicants request reconsideration.

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*, an information display method comprising transferring information about a plurality of users from a server to a terminal of a user, wherein "information about each user includes an interest level of each user in at least one item, and *a figure of [a] model at the level of each user is differently displayed* based on a user's interest level about the item." (emphasis added).

Similarly, claim 13 recites, *inter alia*, an information display system comprising a server for registering information about a plurality of users wherein "information about each user includes an interest level of each user in at least one item, and *a figure of [a] model at the level of each user is differently displayed* based on a user's interest level about the item." (emphasis added).

Claim 16 recites, *inter alia*, an information display method for displaying information about a plurality of users registered in a server, wherein "information about each user includes an interest level of each user in at least one item, and *a figure of [a] model at the level of each user is differently displayed* based on a user's interest level about the item." (emphasis added).

Cheng fails to disclose or suggest a figure of a model at the level of each user that is differently displayed based on a user's interest level about an item. Cheng discloses a system that comprises a priority component. Objects and avatars are prioritized. Thus, objects and avatars with higher priority have enhanced resolution and rendering enabling them to be more life-like in a virtual environment. The enhanced resolution is not responsive to a user's interest level about an item, but is rather a function of the priority assigned to the user corresponding to the avatar.

The Office Action cites Cheng's col. 4, lines 57-65 as disclosing "differently displaying display contents of information about each user displayed on the terminal of the user, on the basis of registration contents of information about the user." (Office Action, pg. 4). However, contrary to the Office Action's assertion, Cheng's col. 4, lines 57-65 recites that "the screen 28 images the participant's avatar, other avatars 17 and a non-avatar object 19."

Cheng defines an avatar as follows: "Avatar, as used herein, *refers to a virtual object* that represents, and is controlled by, a participant. An avatar typically supports, e.g., one or more of body gestures, facial expressions, speech, and emotion. An avatar, while so representing and supporting, can be other than anthropomorphic and can comprise a combination of both animate and inanimate virtual objects." (Col. 3, lines 26-32) (emphasis added). In Cheng, the user merely sees an object representing another user and does not see registered information about that user. Indeed, registered information about the user is displayed independently, in text form (see below), and does not alter the display of the figure of the model in any way.

The Office Action also cites Cheng's col. 9, lines 27-50 as support for disclosure of "a file for describing a model in place of each user within a virtual space

shared by the plurality of users" (Office Action, pg. 4). However, contrary to the Office Action's assertion, Cheng's col. 9, lines 27-50 recites "a control to display the profile of selected objects." This profile is a text display and does not correspond to the differently displayed models and figures of the claimed subject matter.

As detailed in Cheng's col. 9, lines 27-50 and Fig. 8, profile content "can be variously implemented, including via a keystroke – 'p' – with a pointing device (e.g. a mouse) positioned on the object." There is no disclosure in Cheng of "a figure of the model at the level of each user [being] differently displayed based on a user's interest level about the item."

In Applicants' invention, information is transferred about a plurality of users registered in a server, to the terminal of a user and displays contents of information about each user on the terminal of the user, on the basis of registration contents of information about the user. The information is differently displayed as a figure or model responsive to the contents of the information. Cheng merely discloses an avatar, e.g., an image of an animate or inanimate object, and is capable of displaying profile content, e.g., text data pertaining to likes, dislikes, etc., but does not differently display the information as a model or figure based on the registration contents of a user.

Claims 4-7 and 10-12 depend from claim 1. All of the dependent claims should be allowable along with claim 1 for at least the reasons provided above, and for other reasons.

Claims 8-9 and 15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Cheng in view of Farmer et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,476,830). The rejection is respectfully traversed.

Dependent claims 8 and 9 should be allowable at least for reasons similar to those discussed above. Farmer is relied upon for disclosing virtual sales activities and adds nothing to rectify the deficiencies of Cheng, as described herein.

Claim 15 recites, *inter alia*, a game method for communicating via a network with a virtual character, wherein "parameters about each user includes an interest level of each user in at least one item, and a *figure* of [a] model at the level of each user is *differently displayed* based on a user's interest level about the item." (emphasis added).

The deficiencies of Cheng and Farmer are discussed above. Claim 15 should be allowable at least for reasons similar to those discussed above.

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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